

THE BRIDGE, NYC

PILOT: The Path to Love Might Be a Circle

Written by

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*"The hardest thing in life to learn is which bridge to cross
and which to burn." David Russell.*

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The Bridge, NYC

FADE IN:

EXT. Metropolitan Museum - NYC - Early Evening

Limousine gridlock lines the street in front of the MUSEUM.

PAPARAZZI, CELEBRITIES, and MODELS make their way to and ascend the famous stairway towards the Met Ball.

FLASHING BULBS ignite like the Fourth of July.

CUT TO:

INT: MUSEUM - CORRIDOR LEADING TO DRESSING ROOMS - SAME

A young museum page, **TRINITY**, hustles up to a door and taps.

MATCH CUT SFX TAPPING WITH:

MUSIC CUE: SAVAGE GARDEN'S, VIOLET

INT. DRESSING ROOM/MUSEUM HALLWAYS -

An aristocratic beauty, **VIOLET BARLOW** (50's) alabaster skin with perky cheekbones and luminous eyes - sits in front of a mirror getting primped by her GLAM SQUAD. She listens to their litany of dating woes as she sips champagne.

MAKEUP ARTIST

He was like a total loser on paper,
but I was really hungry.

HAIRDRESSER

And lonely.

MAKEUP ARTIST

That too.

HAIRDRESSER (CONT'D)

You'd starve to death if not
for Bumble.

Violet watches these exchanges -

VIOLET

How was he in person?

Violet sheds the cheap black beautician's cape that's protecting her vintage GUCCI LAVENDER SEQUIN GOWN.

VIOLET (CONT'D) MAKEUP ARTIST
Perfect? Perfect.

She takes a spin around checking every angle -

VIOLET
(to everyone)
No such thing. No one is perfect.
There's: *pretty great - pros
outweigh the cons; not too bad I
can deal with this; and, we're both
a mess so why the hell not.*

Music SFX continue as Violet sings over the track.

FOLLOW them through the Museum underground - all the way up to the mezzanine.

VIOLET (V.O.)
(singing)
*'If there's a way you could be everything you want to be,
would you complain that it came too easy?'*

Violet encourages Trinity to sing along - no clue, he's like 18 - he improvises.

She motions him to dance along with her. He tries. Lame.

VIOLET (V.O.)
(singing)
'Like the games with you and me - a resolution hard to see?'

She might be a smidge tipsy. The train of her dress gets pierced by her heel as she dances along. TRIPS. RIP. Without skipping a beat - she tears the hem all the way up to her finely toned thigh and ties it into a bold knot.

CUT TO:

EXT. ENTRANCE MET MUSEUM -

ANNA WINTOUR stands at the entrance and takes Violet's hand.

LIGHTS GO DOWN - a split second of total black then -

MUSEUM is washed in a flood of VIOLET COLORED STROBE LIGHTS.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT./INT. NYC/LIMOUSINE - NEXT DAY

MONTAGE SEQUENCE: MUSIC UP: *SAVAGE GARDEN*, *VIOLET* -

- Outside Violet's Chelsea House, limousine driver, **LOUIS** (30's) stands at the passenger side door holding a folded NY TIMES and schmoozes with the **PRESS**.

- Violet runs from the entrance of her house - waving to the press. She lowers her sunglasses, smiles.

- Greets Louis - he hands her the newspaper.

INT. LIMO

- Violet unfolds it.

FRONT PAGE: VIOLET and ANNA.

SOCIETY PAGE: 'TOM FORD APPROVES VIOLET'S FRESH TAKE ON AN OLD LOOK.'

INSERT: PHOTO of Violet's ripped, thigh-high gown with KNOT.

- Violet's CELL PHONE blowing up with messages.

VIOLET (V.O.)

'I don't see things that are plain to see. I've got a dream to take you over, exploding like a supernova. I'm gonna crash into your world and that's no lie.'

EXT. DOWNTOWN MANHATTAN

- Violet's Limousine double parks in front of a HIGH RISE.

- Louis gets out and directs traffic around the car waiting for Violet's exit.

- An NYPD MOUNTED UNIT rides up and handles an irate **BIKE MESSENGER** who has to swerve around the open car door.

- Violet hands an apple out of the Limo window to the HORSE.

VIOLET (V.O.)

That was my lunch.

- The officer slides a TICKET into the Limo window. Violet signs it and adds a LIPSTICK KISS - passes it back.

VIOLET (V.O.) (CONT'D)
He won't file it, fame has perks.

CUT TO:

INT. HIGH-RISE - LOBBY

Violet walks through the swanky lobby. A uniformed concierge, **BRAXTON** (30's) greets her.

BRAXTON
Ms. Barlow, will you be taking the private elevator today?

Violet surveys the busy lobby full of Bankers, Executives, Assistants, Delivery people ... She gestures *NO*.

VIOLET
I'd hate to miss the opportunity to meet someone interesting. Nothing like uncomfortable proximity to force a potentially profitable conversation.

Braxton smiles - he pushes the PENTHOUSE FLOOR button on the control panel. Violet winks at him as -

DING, the elevator doors open and Violet joins -

INT. ELEVATOR

Two young businesswomen deep in conversation. One, **KAYLIEGH**, a tall RED HEAD head with spiky hair wearing a masculine business suit, and **ABBY**, a BRUNETTE with a no-frills face, but rocket body. Violet studies them for a quick second, checks the floor indicator on the control panel and smiles. She gives them both her business card.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
17th floor, Chase? Call me.

CUT TO:

INT. PENTHOUSE FLOOR

Elevator doors slide open, Violet takes a few steps before arriving at floor to ceiling double-doors with: **THE BRIDGE, NYC: Violet Barlow CEO** etched into the glass.

CUT TO:

INT. THE BRIDGE - RECEPTION AREA

As she walks in, a stunning view of the Hudson looms large.

The view *is the decor*, everything in the space just compliments it - glamorous corner office success.

A few WOMEN, seated in plush chairs filling out applications are filtered through the morning sun. They're stunning.

The receptionist, **BRIDGETTE** (30's) African American with a French accent, gets up from behind her desk and hands Violet a coffee.

BRIDGETTE

Good morning Ms. Barlow.
Over the weekend you received a
couple hundred applications.

ON a maze of cubicles with a half dozen **fashionable young people** on phones and computers. This is not a secretary pool - these are highly educated, multi-cultural and sophisticated shadchanits (Yentas), PR gurus, and recruiters.

VIOLET (V.O.)

It didn't start out this way. I was
a housewife who had no say. Byron
pulled the purse strings; I just
picked the purse and counted the
anniversary rings.

FIND **THEO BARLOW** (25) a mop of rusty penny colored hair, nerdy sexy - on his CELL reading out TWITTER comments. He sees Violet, grabs paper work, photos and walks towards her.

VIOLET (V.O.)

Oh, I did more than that. I was the
CEO of the family: I ran the
household staffs - the crew of The
Violet Azalea - chauffeured Theo
around town taking him to recitals,
math camp and chess matches.

Theo offers Violet a selection of new CLIENT PIX.

VIOLET (V.O.)

'You want to give ecstasy delivered with certainty, but you're afraid that the pleasure won't be needed.'

Violet winds her way through the maze of her associates, reading over their shoulders, snatching print-outs and reading Bios as she walks towards her office.

VIOLET (V.O.)
Well, I wasn't needed anymore. I
was a middle-aged divorcee who
couldn't give away ecstasy.

Grabbing a PHOTO from Theo - Violet scans it.

VIOLET (V.O.)
(re: the photo)
Not entirely true. Guys like this
think they can buy ecstasy for a
\$30 dollar Manhattan and a
compliment. I would know, I was
thirsty and susceptible to anyone's
approval. I hated myself. But I
wanted to feel lovable again.

She rips the photo to shreds tossing it into the garbage.

VIOLET CONT'D (V.O.)
That was then. This is now. THE
BRIDGE, a path to love over any
obstacle: my match making company
and the story of my life. (BEAT)
Did I mention I'm still single?
That the path to love isn't always
a straight line? Sometimes it's a
circle.

END TEASER

ACT ONE

INT. STEVE'S APT - EVENING

Masculine apartment; all chrome, marble and sharp angles. A lighted case holds TROPHIES and FRAMED MAGAZINE COVERS of a SEXY DUDE. A trail of hastily discarded clothing and a chorus of MOANS lead the way to the bedroom -

STEVE (PRE -LAP)
You can just look at it.

INT. STEVE'S BEDROOM

Dimly lit, MOON shining through the window. A modified DELAY OF GAME CLOCK hangs from a stand, it reads: 8:55.

We find a gigantic BED with a MIRROR above it reflecting -

ANGLE ON the finely chiseled back of a hunky man - naked - on his knees straddling a woman laying beneath him. He leans down on one elbow and offers his other arm to her.

CLOSE ON the **WOMAN**, gaze firmly affixed to his torso. Her big BLUE EYES glint in the moonlight - taking in all his physical glory. She licks her lips, seductively strokes his chest. She kisses the palm of his hand and reaches up for a tender kiss. He rebuffs her.

STEVE
Baby, baby - the ring though ...

CLOSE ON a massive, square, diamond encrusted RING.

WOMAN
It's nice. So big and shiny.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GRACIE MANSION - EVENING - SAME

A black tie fund-raiser in full swing: clinking glasses, handshaking, deal making -

PUSHING INTO the crowd we find Violet, radiant - the axis of an ever revolving flow of distinguished men and women. A knowing smile here, a firm handshake there; her attention to each and every one is laser focused. You get the impression that she's the hostess of this affair.

The crowd parts as, **MAYOR ANTHONY CORTAZO** (50's) elegant and imperious, moves in and takes her elbow - gently guiding her out of the ballroom. He kisses her hand.

MAYOR CORTAZO
A beautiful woman is one you
notice; a charming woman is one who
notices you.

Violet glances towards him -

MAYOR CORTAZO (CONT'D)
Needless to say, you're both.

As they walk down the hallway, the Mayor points to a PAINTING of Alexander Hamilton.

MAYOR CORTAZO (CONT'D)
In 1801 Hamilton, a guest of
Archibald Gracie, assembled the
requisite investors needed to
launch the New York Post.

VIOLET
I know all about the rag that
shamed me for months after the
divorce.

He laughs. She grumbles as they walk into -

INT. MAYOR CORTAZO'S OFFICE

A POKER SESSION is mid-game with some of the Mayor's closest friends holding cards. Another select group watch, and mingle. The Mayor and Violet walk behind each player and eye their cards playfully.

MAYOR CORTAZO
Of course this is just for charity.

A waiter offers Violet an oyster. Elegantly she takes it - consumes it - turns the shell over - places it back on the waiter's tray.

VIOLET
I'm not on your ethics committee.

She dabs her mouth with a napkin.

VIOLET CONT'D
Thank God.

As another waiter passes by, the Mayor removes two glasses of champagne from the tray - hands one to Violet.

VIOLET

I'm sorry your wife was not able to be present tonight.

MAYOR CORTAZO

Her inability to be in my presence remains a political and personal hurdle. (BEAT) Thanks to you.

Violet swirls the champagne. Sips -

VIOLET

I don't twist arms, they all come to me with empty arms wide open and begging. You were on your knees with an open wallet and open marriage.

MAYOR CORTAZO

Separation.

VIOLET

Semantics. You cheated on your wife and blamed me. Now she hates both of us.

Violet gestures around the empty room -

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Why the private audience with the Mayor? I've already donated to your campaign.

MAYOR CORTAZO

It's my son.

VIOLET

Please! Little Tony is the Ramses of New York City when he's not DJing naked in Ibiza or snorting bumps off the titties of Estonian models in Milan.

MAYOR CORTAZO

Not Tony Jr., Mariano. He's not the lothario his brother is.

VIOLET

Or his father?

The Mayor laughs off the insult, he knows it's true.

MAYOR CORTAZO

Tony Jr. is a problem for me too, I don't know if he needs rehab or an exorcism.

The Mayor walks to a window and looks out over the Triborough Bridge below. Violet joins him.

VIOLET

Well you know Dr. Phil and the Pope, so you're covered either way. (BEAT) You rarely mention Mariano, and it's not because he's the black sheep of the family.

MAYOR CORTAZO

(pensive)

La famiglia e tutto. My family is everything, fractured as we may be. I lovingly tolerate wanton Tony; I don't even understand Mariano. Is it wrong to hope I can redeem myself with the next generation?

Violet places her champagne down on the Mayor's desk.

VIOLET

You want to avoid a smear campaign in the upcoming election focused on your declassé sons. Should I host a slumber party with your wife too? Will that be redemption enough?

Mayor Cortazo succumbs to Violet's candor. He sits on his desk. Violet takes a moment to think.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

I'll meet Mariano ... on the condition that I have access to Tony Jr. as well.

MAYOR CORTAZO

You can have access to him, but he'll hit on you.

VIOLET

Antonio, he hit on me when he was 20 and I was married. I know who Tony Jr. is. It's Mariano I don't know anything about - but - having both the Mayor's sons as clients will elevate my brand. And it's not pro-bono.

The Mayor nods, picks up Violet's glass, hands it back to her
- they toast.

MAYOR CORTAZO
When can I expect grand kids?

VIOLET
My work stops at the bedroom door.

As Violet leaves the Mayor's office, she takes her cell out
of her purse and punches in a number.

FOLLOW Violet as she weaves through party guests and into a
small, quiet alcove.

INT. INTERCUT WITH STEVE'S BEDROOM/MAYOR'S MANSION

- STEVE'S BEDROOM

Cell phone BUZZES. GAME CLOCK rolls into 9:00 PM.

- Steve extricates himself from entanglement - leaps off the
woman - rolls over the bed, onto the floor - rummages through
his clothes and the tousled bed linens.

He follows the sound of the phone until he locates his jacket
- turned inside out. He can't find the pocket the phone is in
- shuffles around urgently - knocking the CLOCK stand over -
CRASHING to the ground.

STEVE
Shit, shit, shit ...

He finds his cell phone but trips over the woman's BRA which
is tucked into one of the sleeves. He manages to answer the
call just as he falls forward accidentally launching the
phone out of reach. As he crawls towards it -

- MAYOR'S MANSION

VIOLET
Steve. It's 9:00 PM. You should be
ordering dessert about now.
Checking in. How's it going? Steve?

- STEVE'S BEDROOM

Steve is on the floor reaching for the phone, he motions to
the woman to "shush" - blows her a kiss and smiles. We now
see that **STEVE** is the same sexy dude we saw on the framed
magazine covers. A New York Giants stud.

Composing himself, he sits crossed legged - still naked - and puts the CLOCK over his privates. It flashes 00:00. All business now.

STEVE

Here, Here. Going great Violet.

He looks back to the woman, can't for the life of him remember her name -

STEVE (CONT'D)

She's ... We're ... Having a great time. Excellent restaurant.

- MAYOR'S MANSION

VIOLET

Try the Lychee sorbet, zero carbs but to die for. And remember, ask Joanna questions about her! Don't focus on your Super Bowl ring.

- STEVE'S BEDROOM

STEVE

(phffft)

Didn't even cross my mind. Thanks.

Steve hustles back towards the bed - checking himself out in another MIRROR on the wall before diving into bed where the woman is eagerly anticipating his return. He hoists her up on top of himself and tosses the phone -

STEVE (CONT'D)

So, Joanna, tell me about yourself.

And ... mumbled words dissolve into frantic love-making -

- MAYOR'S MANSION

Violet hears the proceedings. Genius Steve has inadvertently not ended the call. She holds her phone far away from her ear with one hand and puts a finger over the other ear.

VIOLET

I can hear you. That's not desert.
It's sex.

Violet, irritated, ends this call and dials another.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
Violet Barlow. Hal please.

As Violet quietly converses on the phone -

ANGLE ON DAVID GROBAN (55) earnest, stiff, ridiculously thick glasses and bad posture - watches Violet then lifts a tentative hand indicating he'd like a word.

Violet ends her call and walks towards David, her mind racing to place him - she knows everyone here - everyone of importance in the City. Got it: the glasses and slump.

He looks around and puts his hands in his pockets.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
Dr. Groban right? New York Pres.
Pediatric Cardiology. We met at the
Symphony donor gala.

David shifts nervously and smiles.

DAVID GROBAN
Yes. Yes.

VIOLET
Your job must be very rewarding.

DAVID GROBAN
It can be.

Violet holds eye contact with him.

DAVID GROBAN (CONT'D)
I love my wife. She's a saint.
We're bonded. In spirit.

VIOLET
But not physically.

David becomes increasingly uncomfortable - regretting his overture, but Violet continues to stare right at him, penetrating his psyche.

DAVID GROBAN
We haven't had sex in years.

VIOLET
That must be very frustrating. I'm
sorry.

David is ashamed - embarrassed. Nods.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
 I'm sorry because I don't accept
 married men as clients. Even if I
 did - therapy would be cheaper.

Violet hands him her card. He looks at it like it's poison.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
 When you get home tonight, hug your
 wife. Tell her she's the best thing
 that's ever happened to you, and
 you're lucky to have her. You won't
 be lying.

David's hand shakes as he holds her card.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
 Then rip that card up and throw it
 away, not your marriage.

CUT TO:

INT. THE BRIDGE OFFICE - MORNING

Violet walks into the reception area. Bridgette gets up to
 greet her and hands her a coffee.

BRIDGETTE
 Good morning Ms. Barlow. One client
 scheduled for 9:30 - music guy,
 flew in from Nashville, extremely
 enthusiastic about meeting you.

VIOLET
 Morning Bridgette, get Steve
 Fordham on the phone for me please.
 Apparently he's still confusing The
 Bridge for The Tinder.

On the way to her office, Theo steps out of his office -

THEO
 How was dinner with the Mayor?

VIOLET
 Coffin Bay Oysters, so at a hundred
 dollars a swallow ... he spares no
 expense to get what he wants.

THEO
 And what does he want this time?

VIOLET
 Besides being re-elected - for us
 to work with his youngest son,
 Mariano.

THEO
 Too bad we can't lure Tony Jr.

VIOLET
 Oh, Theo, how you underestimate me.

Theo looks at his mother, apprehensive.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
 I know. We'll need background
 checks, a private detective, the PR
 team and someone to clean up the
 internet trail of debauchery.

They continue down the hall until they reach Theo's office.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
 According to the Mayor, Mariano is
 nothing like him or Tony Jr.

THEO
 So, not a predatory sexually
 dysfunctional anomaly?

Violet cuts to the chase.

VIOLET
 So not a total pervy sleaze ball.

THEO
 I have a young lady in my office
 who is ... unique.

They arrive at Theo's office - he ushers Violet in.

INT. THEO'S OFFICE

Spare, not as glamorous as the rest of the space - lots of
 books, a couple guitars.

A young WOMAN sits in front of Theo's desk. She's *cute* plain.

THEO
 Ruth Penner, this is Violet Barlow.

The two women shake hands. Violet takes a seat across from
 Ruth. Theo sits at his desk and reviews Ruth's file.

VIOLET

Thank you for coming to meet us.
How can we assist you?

RUTH

No, thank you. Well, I'm already 25
and I haven't ever had a boyfriend.
I mean not a real one.

VIOLET

What do you mean, 'real one?'

RUTH

I've dated a few guys. I've tried
online dating, Plenty of Fish in
the Sea...

VIOLET

It's just Plenty of Fish - they
don't say if it's a sea or a swamp.

The joke is lost on Ruth. Theo clears his throat. Violet lets
Ruth continue.

RUTH

I don't want a boyfriend, I want a
husband. One that will honor his
vows, and his faith.

VIOLET

Are you religious?

RUTH

Mennonite. I moved here from Ohio
to go to Cornell. I'm a virgin.

The air leaves the room. Violet lets the information settle.

VIOLET

So that's what 'not a real
boyfriend means.' (BEAT)
No premarital sex I take it. What
about your prospective husband?

Ruth blushes. Squirms in her seat.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Well, it's tricky to go from
meeting someone to marrying someone
without the boyfriend phase.

RUTH

I know this is unusual and probably
unrealistic.

Violet looks to Theo who nods his head yes. Ruth laughs.

VIOLET

Ruth, I'm glad you came to us. We call our company The Bridge because we are a pathway over any obstacle. It may take a few ... a while ... to find suitable choices for you, but we will absolutely find someone worthy of you.

Violet gets up, shakes Ruth's hand. Heading out the door -

VIOLET (CONT'D)

What are you studying in Ithaca?

RUTH

Agricultural Engineering.

Violet stops, this is unusual in her line of work.

VIOLET

Farming? Loaves and Fishes with combines instead of miracles?

RUTH

Sustainable farming in under served areas with food deserts. And actual deserts. Yes, but with God's blessing.

VIOLET

Well this is positively the least glamorous occupation of any of our clients so far and I represent Morticians, and Proctologists.

RUTH

What I want isn't glamorous.

VIOLET

Physical type you're looking for?

RUTH

(thinking, blushing)
I think John Legend is cute.

VIOLET

Thought you'd say Tim Tebow.

RUTH

How about a cross between both?

CUT TO:

INT. VIOLET'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The room is like the inside of a cloud: all white except for the gallery walls covered in Annie Leibovitz signed PHOTOGRAPHS and framed photos of VIOLET WITH FAMOUS PEOPLE.

Violet enters, goes to the window and peers across the river at Lady Liberty.

Bridgette buzzes in on speaker.

BRIDGETTE (O.C.)
Steve Fordham on line One and Mr.
Feldsteen in five minutes.

At the last name, a momentary flicker registers on Violet's face. She shakes it off.

VIOLET
(on speaker phone)
Great. Ask someone to find me some
virgins - 20's to 40's. Never been
married. (SILENCE) Bridgette? I
need male virgin adjacent who are
not incels. (still SILENCE)
Bridgette? OK, like the opposite of
Steve Fordham then. Religious?
Farmers?

Violet punches line ONE on her phone.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
Steven Harrison Fordham. I know
every Maitre'd in this town. You
never even went to your table,
which, by the way, I Venmo'd Hal an
extra couple Benjamins to get you
the best table at the Tap Room. You
weren't suppose to take it
literally.

STEVE (O.C.)
(on speaker)
I just saw her, and I knew ...

VIOLET
She'd be a bed-side cheerleader
guiding your kick into the end zone
for a score?

STEVE
(on speaker)
We talked.

VIOLET

You talked. You're on probation until you agree to a Dating 101 program with us. The Bridge isn't in the business of love'm and leave'm.

STEVE

(on speaker)

But Joanna's still here, she's flipping gluten-free quinoa pancakes right now. Is that bad?

Violet is confused - what? She starts to lecture Steve -

Then the door opens and an ASSISTANT, escorts **DON FELDSTEEN** (50's) into the office.

ASSISTANT

Ms. Barlow, this is Mr. Don Feldsteen.

Violet audibly gasps - pushes all the buttons on the phone.

VIOLET

(still on speaker)

Bridgette. Hang up please.

She's speechless. She stares at him from head to toe: the cowboy boots, the pressed jeans, crisp plaid shirt with pearly buttons - the handsome weathered face. The cowboy hat.

Don walks towards her, takes off his cowboy hat and runs his hands through his only slightly silvered ginger hair.

ASSISTANT

(perplexed)

Mr. Feldsteen, have a seat. Ms. Stoner, would you like a coffee?
Mr. Feldsteen?

Violet finally finds her composure, waves the assistant away.

DON

Violet!

VIOLET

Don?

They stumble awkwardly over each other with pleasantries.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Oh, my god - please, sit.

Don remains standing for a moment, then takes a seat.

DON
Hate to be left standing a second
time.

Violet drops her head into her hands.

DON (CONT'D)
I'm mess'n with you. I got over it.
It was 24 years, 8 months, two
weeks and 3 days ago.

VIOLET
I'm still ashamed. You deserved so
much better. But look at you now.
Rock Star. How many Grammys?

Don holds up 5 fingers.

DON
You deserved so much better too.
But look at you now, a matchmaker
who left her fiance at the altar.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. COUNTRY CLUB BALL ROOM - EVENING

Screen reads: almost 25 years ago

Over a stage full of musical instruments, mics, amps etc: A
BANNER: DON & VIOLET'S LAST NIGHT OF FREEDOM PARTY.

It's a swanky rehearsal dinner affair but with elements of a
country hoe down: bales of hay, corn on the cob cart -

A younger Violet circulates with the guests.

She sits down at a table with a **BOMBSHELL WOMAN** corralling a
bunch of similarly gorgeous offspring.

A **KENNY CHESNEY TYPE** with a guitar slung over his shoulder
walks over and plants a deep, slobbery kiss on the woman's
mouth - *this is how babies are made kind of kiss.*

VIOLET (V.O.)
According to Darwin, Natural
Selection is the theory that those
with the best genes get to
reproduce. Survival of the Fittest.
It's why lead singers in rock bands
have so many kids.

The energy in the room ramps up as **BAND MEMBERS** emerge from the crowd, take to the stage and tune their instruments.

VIOLET (V.O.)
They attract Super models. No one ever talks about the bassists or the drummers - except Tommy Lee, but that's a whole other yardstick by which to measure success.

The Kenny Chesney type guy leaps on stage and sucks the rest of the energy out of the room with his raw, sexual intensity.

Violet tosses a lustful glance at him. Checks herself.

VIOLET (V.O.)
I was always attracted to the Alpha type, you know - big charisma, bad karma; self-absorbed but engulfing when he paid attention to you ...

A younger Don swaggers up to Violet offering a tepid kiss on her cheek then lumbers towards the stage.

VIOLET (V.O.)
But Don was just so sweet, I made a concession. And a commitment. To be married. The next day.

The entire band is now kick'n it with a full blown country rock anthem. The HARMONICA PLAYER - jamming at the very back of the stage.

VIOLET (V.O.)
In the hierarchy of band desirability - after all the popular hot guys - the harmonica players are just above the banjo players. Thanks only to Bob Dylan and Bruce Springsteen.

Don and his BANJO are relegated just off stage.

VIOLET (V.O.)
The banjo players though ...

BACK TO CURRENT:

INT. VIOLET'S OFFICE - SAME

VIOLET
It wasn't the altar - it was our rehearsal dinner. But, point taken.
(MORE)

VIOLET (CONT'D)

I'm sure you've heard about my marriage.

DON

I did. I'm sorry.

VIOLET

So, are you in the market for a companion? Are you married now?

DON

I wouldn't be at a place like this if I was married.

VIOLET

Well, you're in the minority. Are you looking for someone special?

DON

Extraordinary.

VIOLET

What would that person would look like.

Don leans in and takes Violet's hands in his.

DON

Exactly like you.

End Act One

ACT TWO

INT. BALTHAZAR RESTAURANT - NOON

We pan through the packed restaurant - waiters carrying trays over head, weaving through important people.

We find Violet, at a premier table set for two - alone. She's on the phone when the Maitre'd escorts **HUNTER FOX** (35) to her table - carrying a Louis Vuitton duffle bag, and meticulously dressed.

Violet stands to meet him. He sits down first.

HUNTER FOX

My apologies for being late.

Violet smiles, waves it off.

HUNTER FOX (CONT'D)

I actually use my tardiness as a way to assess the character of someone I'm meeting for the first time. Reactions to petty annoyances reveal a lot about someone.

VIOLET

And how did I do?

He snaps his finger at the nearest server and waves them over.

Violet looks around awkwardly and sits.

Hunter then opens his duffle bag and pulls out **THREE BOTTLES** placing them on the table.

HUNTER FOX

(to the server)

I'll need an ice bucket for the Champagne, keep the ice-wine in the cooler in back, and let's have two Bordeaux glasses. You don't charge me a corkage fee of course.

Waiving the server off, Hunter takes the bottle of red, and holds it up like a prized specimen.

HUNTER FOX (CONT'D)

Merlot is the centerpiece of our vineyard: it's complex and subtle at the same time... a bit like me.
(MORE)

HUNTER FOX (CONT'D)

Our terroire is unmatched, we've
owned the land for over a century.

The waiter returns with the ice-bucket, another waiter brings
the glasses and a third waiter removes the small bottle of
Ice-Wine. Hunter motions them to proceed with the
formalities. Champagne pops - flows; the Red is decanted.

HUNTER FOX (CONT'D)

I hope you like three course meals.
I only eat once a day - an homage
to the Romans. Without the barfing
of course.

They swirl the Merlot - then pick up the Champagne and toast -

VIOLET

Hail Caesar.

HUNTER FOX

I'm an Epicurean. You know that
doesn't mean I'm just a Foodie
correct?

VIOLET

Epicureans were essentially
Hedonists who mainly ate bread,
cheese and olives. And they were
Greek. Do you like to cook?

Hunter's a bit stumped.

HUNTER FOX

I have a personal chef. He knows
I'm wheat, dairy and salt free.

The waiter places menus on the table. Hunter puts his hand on
the waiter's hand pushing the menus away.

HUNTER FOX (CONT'D)

We'll have my usual. And share.

He smiles, pats his clearly svelte stomach and puts his
elbows on the table, leaning into Violet expectantly -

VIOLET

So. Mr. Fox, I must admit, I was
surprised to see your name come
across the desk. You're one of the
city's most eligible bachelors.

HUNTER FOX

Call me Hunter. That's the problem, I've met most of the women in this city. Zero. My standards are very high. I might as well be in DeKalb.

VIOLET

Cindy Crawford is from DeKalb.

HUNTER FOX

(dismissive)

She's what, 50 now?

VIOLET

I'm 50.

Oops, but Hunter's too dense to be embarrassed.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

I won't even need a new set of dentures until next year.

Hunter is slightly confused, he leans in to get a better look at her teeth.

The waiter delivers the first course. He sets it down and begins to precisely divvy up the food onto two tiny plates.

Violet leans back giving ample room. Hunter too leans back in his chair - he takes the napkin from his lap and SNAPS it out before tucking it into his collar. He motions for Violet to do the same. She does. They begin to eat.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

And none of the women in New York City meet those standards? Tell me what you're looking for.

HUNTER FOX

An equal. Like minded. My alter ego. I don't want to have to explain myself.

VIOLET

So you don't want the burden of communication?

Hunter laughs.

HUNTER FOX

No, no. I love banter. It's so charming. I have a constant need to unleash my knowledge - like intellectual masturbation.

VIOLET

Sounds like you should be a Philosophy professor. Any physical attributes you're looking for or should I just hold up a mirror and you can point?

Again, Hunter laughs, he thinks *she's* charming.

TIME CUT TO:

The bottle of red is still half full as the waiter begins to set the table for dessert. Hunter motions for him to stop.

HUNTER FOX

So you see I'm in a predicament. I've plowed the ground down to bare earth. Nothing left to harvest here in this city for a suitable mate.

VIOLET

Mr. Fox ...

HUNTER FOX

Hunter, please.

VIOLET

What I'm learning today is that you believe the world and every woman in it revolves around your perceived superiority and entitlement. You're also miserly and slightly vulgar. Yet you think only a perfect mate is suitable.

Hunter's perplexed, incapable of self reflection.

HUNTER FOX

It's Manhattan. Doesn't everyone?

CUT TO:

INT. VIOLET'S LIMO - LATER

Violet is on her cell phone.

VIOLET

And find out who referred Hunter Fox as a client. I felt like I was being punked.

She ends the call and leans up towards Louis so she can speak to him without raising her voice from the back.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
 Entitled people can't change their behavior even when they're not getting what they want. They blame the fire on the flames instead of admitting they lit the match.

Louis views Violet in the rear view mirror.

LOUIS
 The written word for Change in Chinese is comprised of two characters: the first, Crisis, the second, Opportunity.

Violet sits back and looks out the window.

VIOLET
 He's supplying the Crisis, so it's up to me to supply the Opportunity.

Violet leans back up towards Louis.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
 What's the Chinese character for 'fuck me?'

SMASH CUT:

INT. VIOLET'S OFFICE - LATER

Theo is sitting at Violet's desk with a file. Violet walks in, tosses her coat and throws herself into her chair.

VIOLET
 Well? Who was it?

THEO
 His mother.

VIOLET
 Oh, great. What was your read on him when you went over his application?

THEO
 ESFP on Myers Briggs, and has a cerebral narcissist variant.

VIOLET
 Variant? He's the entire Frito-Lays variety pack of Narcissism.

Bridgette taps on the open door and walks in with an extravagant BOUQUET of flowers all in shades of lavender, purple and loaded with sprigs of violet.

Violet takes the accompanying card and reads -

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Dear Ms. Barlow, what an absolute pleasure meeting with you today, it's no wonder you are the matchmaker to the stars. I apologize for my forthright demeanor, but I consider my honesty one of my greatest assets. Not only are you exceptional at your job, but you are magnificent as well. I look forward to the next phase of working together.

Violet hands the card to Theo.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Put it in his file.

THEO

Sounds like Byron.

VIOLET

Yep, the irredeemable behavior followed by the faux apology, then the Love Bomb. It's almost like it's textbook or something.

THEO

Jung would say he's a jester.

Violet rolls her eyes.

VIOLET

He's vexing with a huge ego and witless. Does sound like Byron though.

(to Bridgette)

Set up a meeting with Hunter's mother - if we're going to work with this guy, we need to know how he got this way.

Bridgette nods.

BRIDGETTE

On it. Your four applicants are ready for you in the lounge.

(MORE)

BRIDGETTE (CONT'D)

Three as potential matches and one to be matched with.

CUT TO:

INT. THE BRIDGE - LOUNGE

In lieu of a meeting room per se, the lounge replicates the look of an upscale piano bar.

We see the two women we saw before in the elevator: KAYLIEGH (20's) - the one with the spiky red hair; and ABBY (20's) - face for business, bod for sin. They're deep in conversation.

HANIA (30's) - petite, with a mass of light brown curly hair she hides behind. She heads towards the piano, sits down and plays a few bars of Chopin.

MARTHA (30's) - Latina cut from the same cloth as Sofia Vergara - she makes herself comfortable by pouring a glass of wine. She holds up the bottle by way of offering the other women a drink. They all decline.

INT. VIOLET'S OFFICE - SAME

Through a *two-way mirror*, Violet alternates between referencing the women's Social Media profiles and watching the WOMEN in the lounge. It's only slightly voyeuristic: she needs to know how the women react when they don't know they're being evaluated versus their demeanor when they're trying to impress her. As Violet walks out -

VIOLET

(to Bridgette)

Martha doesn't have a Social Media Profile?

INT. LOUNGE

Violet walks in and greets the women.

VIOLET

Kayliegh, Abby, thank you for coming up from the 17th floor.
 Hania, a pleasure to see you again.
 Martha, it's so nice to meet you.
 Please, ladies get comfortable.

The women take seats at the small tables - Hania remains at the piano. Martha brings the bottle of wine with her.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
 Some of you I've met before, I
 guess Martha you're the only one
 that reached out to us. Can you
 tell me about yourself.

MARTHA
 (enthusiastically, in a
 Colombian accent)
 Oh, thank you, this is so exciting.
 I'm from Barranquilla. I've only
 been in New York City for - oh,
 maybe - I don't know - some months.
 I love it here so much. Everyone is
 so kind.

VIOLET
 What brought you here?

Martha takes ever so slight a pause...

MARTHA
 A plane.
 (she laughs a little)
 Visitor's Visa.

Violet knows she's lying. Everyone lies about something.

Violet digs in on the offensive -

VIOLET
 To The Bridge. Specifically. Here?

MARTHA
 Quality. Reputation. Confidence.

VIOLET
 Confidentiality?

Martha nods energetically, YES!

VIOLET (CONT'D)
 I can see why everyone is so nice
 to you. You're positively
 effervescent. Surely you don't have
 a hard time meeting men?

MARTHA
 Men meet me, they introduce
 themselves. But I don't *meet* men.

Violet tries to interpret this explanation.

VIOLET

Men notice you and reach out, but they're not what you are looking for? What kind of man would interest you?

MARTHA

At home, we have a saying, '*Las Colombianas no solo se conectan, nos comemos.*' (BEAT) Colombians don't just like to hook up, we like to eat you. So you know - something like that.

VIOLET

Well then, I guess we're all hungry.

Kayleigh and Abby laugh, Hania more snorts than laughs. It's cartoonish, definitely not sexy. Violet is startled but glosses over it. Moving on -

VIOLET (CONT'D)

I met Hania backstage at the Philharmonic after a special engagement for donors.

(to Hania)

I didn't know you played the piano.

Hania twists tighter spirals into her already curly hair, fidgets with her hands. She clears her throat.

HANIA

(strong Israeli accent)

I started out playing the piano, but my mother told me I was not attractive enough to be in front. My father gave me the French Horn to play instead. We're in the back.

Gasp. No one knows what to say - they all say the first thing that comes to mind -

VIOLET

Hania, you're lovely.

MARTHA

Pendejo.

KAYLEIGH

Oh, honey.

ABBY

What the actual fuck?

Kayleigh gets up from her table and sits next to Hania, adjusting a strand of curls covering her face.

KAYLIEGH

(to Hania)

My father told me I was built like
a line-backer.

Martha goes to the bar, grabs a glass, fills it to the top
with wine and puts it in Hania's hand. Abby starts to cry.

ABBY

(to Kayleigh)

You never told me that.

KAYLIEGH

You've seen me naked!

Hania starts to cry.

VIOLET

(to Kayleigh and Abby)

You're gay?! OK?! Both of you?!

KAYLIEGH

Yes!

Bi!

ABBY

Kayleigh and Abby look to each other in dismay.

KAYLIEGH

You'd never had an orgasm.

ABBY

I did so.

KAYLIEGH

But not with an actual man.

Violet watches this surreal tableau unfold.

VIOLET

Ladies - and battery operated male-
like body parts - let's reset.

Violet gets up, goes to the *two way mirror* and shrugs her
shoulders. She then takes a seat near the piano bench where
Kayleigh has embraced Hania with a compassionate hug.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Kayleigh, why don't you take Hania
to the ladies room and then maybe
step outside for some fresh air.

Just as Kayleigh and Hania are walking out the door of the
lounge, Bridgette scurries in giving Violet a discreet *nod*.

BRIDGETTE

Ms. Barlow, you have a call -

VIOLET

Ladies, my apologies, let's set up a date for you and I to meet another time and go into detail about what you're looking for and who might be a perfect match.

Everybody exits. As the women and Bridgette head towards the main lobby, Violet ducks into her office next door.

INT. VIOLET'S OFFICE -

Violet scrambles in, kicks her shoes off and throws herself down on her couch.

VIOLET

Oh. My. God.

Bridgette buzzes in on speaker phone -

BRIDGETTE (O.C.)

Ms. Barlow?

Violet rolls off the couch and answers the phone.

VIOLET

That went off the rails spectacularly. By the way, Martha says she's here on a Visitor's Visa - was that verified?

BRIDGETTE (O.C.)

I'll double check. Why?

VIOLET

She fibbed about her story.

BRIDGETTE (O.C.)

Will do. When shall I call Louis?

VIOLET

In twenty. (BEAT) Why do parents allow their daughters to feel unattractive? Did your parents tell you you were beautiful?

INSERT CLOSE ON Bridgette's magnificently sculpted face.

BRIDGETTE

They told me I was intelligent.
Hard working. Whimsical.

VIOLET

You don't describe yourself that
way in *your* dating profile.

BRIDGETTE

'Intelligent' doesn't get hits.
'Hard working' is a red flag.
'Whimsical' reads Cluster B
personality disorder. You know, Key
Words. Why?

VIOLET

If you're not honest about who you
really are, how am I supposed to
find the right person for you? I'm
not in the business of matching
algorithms. I do people. Not Key
Words. (BEAT) I want you and every
one of my clients to rewrite their
profiles. Truthfully. And I don't
want to see: "spontaneous, sense of
humor, outgoing *and* likes to cuddle
by the fire" on any of them. That
person doesn't exist, and if they
did - they've been on 48 HOURS and
are currently doing 3 to life.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. SOHO - LATER

Old St. Patrick's sits in the middle of Mulberry Street. Spring blossoms curl around cast-iron building facades.

INT. DR. HARA BANERJEE'S OFFICE

It's a zen oasis for peace of mind. Church Bells CHIME into the room from across the street, loud enough that **DR. BANERJEE** 40's holds her hand up momentarily halting the session.

Violet sits on a couch across from the Dr. in mid session.

The bells stop and then -

DR. BANERJEE

I find it interesting that you used the word 'confess' - that implies guilt. Can you tell me about that?

VIOLET

I feel guilty. I feel guilty about my ex-husband's behavior. I feel guilty about leaving my fiance the night before our wedding. I feel guilty that I might be a fraud like Byron.

DR. BANERJEE

Why would you feel like a fraud?

VIOLET

Because I'm selling relationships for a living but been a failure in every one I've ever had.

DR. BANERJEE

Ending a relationship because it doesn't work out is not failure, it's recognition and growth.

Violet is teary, trying to hold it back.

DR. BANERJEE (CONT'D)

It's also painful.(BEAT) Why did you leave your fiance?

VIOLET

We had a last wholesome roll in the hay - then I told Don I loved him as a friend, but he was too predictable. (BEAT) I wanted someone with a 10 gallon hat personality. Excitement. Unpredictability. I thought that's what I deserved.

DR. BANERJEE

Did you get what you deserved? Excitement, unpredictability - when you married Byron?

OFF Violet as the irony sets in.

FLASHBACK:

EXT. AERIAL SHOT OF DOWNTOWN MANHATTAN - DAY

SCREEN READS: 3 Years Earlier

NEWS CHOPPERS circling over lower Manhattan like vultures. As we PAN DOWN: the SDNY COURTHOUSE comes into view - swarming with news vans, and reporters jockeying for position on the steps. Bystanders spill out into the streets.

CUT TO:

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

A **JUDGE** presides over a tense, packed court. She's peering at the defendant, **BYRON BARLOW** (50's) debonair in his expensive suit, confidence beaming from his spray on tanned face. Seated next to his lawyers, he runs his fingers through his glossy hair then glances incorrigibly at the camera.

Over Byron's shoulder sits, Violet (47) we can't see her face through the netting of her Chanel hat, but the tension in her body says it all.

The **BAILIFF** takes the verdict from the Judge then hands it back to the **HEAD JUROR**.

JUDGE

Has the jury reached a verdict?

HEAD JUROR

We have, your Honor.

JUDGE

Will the defendant please rise.

Byron turns briefly towards Violet, then stands.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

On the count of Embezzlement, how do you find?

HEAD JUROR

We find the defendant, Byron Miles Barlow, guilty.

JUDGE

On the count of Money Laundering, how do you find?

HEAD JUROR

Guilty.

JUDGE

On the count of Wire Fraud how do you find?

HEAD JUROR

Guilty.

As the cascade of guilty verdicts roll in, Violet's tension has given way to limp defeat. She tugs her hat further down over her face.

The court room empties and Byron is lead away - leaving only Violet and one of his lawyers, **REGGIE KIM** (60's). He takes Violet's hand and leads her through the exit door.

REGGIE KIM

Stay as close to me as you can.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Violet stands atop the courthouse steps, surrounded by the trial's chaotic media frenzy.

She inches her way through the crowd guided by Reggie as her protector. Every step is a push through reporters eager for just one word or photo to put on the front page - or prime time.

Once she finally reaches the last step, a phalanx of police officers block the reporters, looky-loos and photographers long enough for Reggie to get her to a cab.

Violet looks at the cab with disdain, then back to Reggie. He has to force her in. Leaning in to the cab -

VIOLET
Reggie, a CAB?!

REGGIE
The limo has already been
confiscated.
(to the driver)
Get her out of Manhattan as fast as
you can and lose the press.
(to Violet)
Stay away from Greenwich for a
couple hours. I'll call you later.

CUT TO:

EXT. HELL'S KITCHEN - HOURS LATER

We find Violet limping down a sketchy street. Her hat is gone, her hair is disheveled and her once white suit is now city grime beige.

She takes her shoes off and continues bare foot down the sidewalk. She's confronted with a choice between the lesser of two evils - continue with blisters on both feet and use her shoes as a weapon if necessary - or duck into the seedy bar up ahead. She opts for the latter.

INT. DOROTHY'S TRAILER PARK SALOON - CONTINUOUS

Violet enters into almost complete darkness, it takes a few seconds for her eyes to adjust - the bar at first seems like a glorified hallway. She looks at the floor and gasps - grimacing, she slides her feet partially back into her shoes and limps to the bar.

On her way she sees a small rigged up STAGE with a neon sign behind it reading: DOROTHY'S TRAILER PARK SALOON.

As her eyes continue to adjust - the patrons come into view. **TRANS, OLD QUEERS** and **DRAG QUEENS**, some in full make-up, most without their wigs on yet.

A few of the men nod her way - she smiles-ish. She uses her purse to wipe off a seat at the bar.

The **BARTENDER** looks like an inflated version of Keith Richards - the eyeliner and dangly things in his long, thinning hair which begins at the top of his ears.

He wears a leather vest secured around his waist with several safety pins linked together.

He takes the rag that's tucked into the back of his pants and wipes the bar in front of Violet.

Violet retrieves a tissue out of her purse and daintily wipes the bar again - then looks to see if there is anything she can hang her purse on. Nope. She clutches it to her chest and studies her surroundings now that she can see.

VIOLET
(gesturing to the sign)
Dorothy as in 'we're not in Kansas
anymore?'

The patrons sitting at the bar assess her attire - mostly admiring her lovely soft jawline and hairless face.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
Or Dorothy as in 'beauty is skin
deep but ugly cuts to the bone?'

BARTENDER
Are you thirsty or just here for
the ambience and entertainment?

Violet attempts another smile when she's distracted by -

The TV SCREEN above the bar: *GAY, SMDB PORN* in all its glory.

VIOLET
I want to gag, and rinse my eyes
with Valtrex.

She whips her head to the side to avoid a climactic close up.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
(re: the entertainment)
Wouldn't something Judy Garlandy be
more apropos?

BARTENDER
What'll ya be?

She lifts her purse up to shield her eyes from the TV.

VIOLET
I'd like to be the recipient of a
Perrier and a perfect Manhattan.
Dash of bitters, no cherry, lime
for the bottled water.

BARTENDER

I'd like to be a South Korean
synchronized swimmer. Let's talk
about reality. I got beer. I got
shots.

The bartender takes a remote control and starts switching the
channels.

INSERT TV SCREEN as a series of PORN CHANNELS flicker past.
Violet holds the tissue up over her eyes now.

VIOLET

I see. Fine. Whiskey. Neat. Do I
choose which one, or does it all
just come from last night's drain?

ON TV SCREEN ... Channels keep changing until - CNN NEWS:
clip of VIOLET AND BYRON WALKING UP THE COURTHOUSE STEPS
earlier this morning.

The Bartender looks at Violet, then back to the screen. He
turns on vintage MTV.

BARTENDER

You've had a hard day, Jamesons?

VIOLET

Fine.

BARTENDER

That's sixteen.

VIOLET

Dollars? Geez, that seems pricey,
does it come with someone's
lipstick on the rim of a Solo cup
as a souvenir?

He sets a glass in front of her and pours. Violet hands him a
twenty. He rotates to the register, counts out the change -
twists back around and drops it on the bar. Glass is empty.

BARTENDER

Jesus, you have had a day. Here.
Have another on me.

He pours the last of the bottle. She knocks it back.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)

Wanna talk about it?

VIOLET
If I talk about it, it'll make it
real.

Violet motions for another round.

VIOLET CONT'D
Anything to eat around here that
won't give me salmonella or
syphilis?

BARTENDER
O'Malley's, couple blocks over,
nicer part of town. Authentic Irish
corned beef and cabbage. It's gassy
though.

VIOLET
How do you know it's authentic
Irish - I mean, since you're into
South Korean culture?

The Bartender rolls up a dingy sleeve revealing a meaty
forearm with a tattoo: TADA GAN IARRACHT.

BARTENDER
(in Irish brogue)
Nothing without Effort.

Violet leans in for a closer look -

VIOLET
Do the Irish use different Scrabble
tiles based on their preference for
consonants?

The bartender laughs.

BARTENDER
Yes.

He offers his hand to shake. Violet taps it with her finger
tips.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
Declan O'Malley.

VIOLET
Violet. Barlow.
(pointing to the TV
SCREEN)
But you know that already.

BARTENDER

O'Malley's is my Grandad's place,
the Irish mob used to count their
money there, not so much anymore.

VIOLET

Of course not. My husband probably
stole their money too.

Violet stacks the change neatly on the bar, as she does, the huge diamond in her wedding ring catches her eye. She stares at it for a second and then turns the stone around so that all she sees is the plain band of platinum.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Oh God.

She drops her head down and spins the diamond around and around.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Confiscating the limo was the tip
of the iceberg.

She holds up her hand and flashes the diamond.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

(to the bartender)
They're coming for the actual ice
next.

Violet's cell phone rings - she digs through her purse - sees the name on the phone - grabs it.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Reggie?

REGGIE (O.C.)

Violet, the Village is swarming
with media. I booked a suite at the
Marriott for the night. Stay low.

VIOLET

Stay low? The bartender in Hell's
Kitchen knows who I am.

She ends the call and starts to cry - hysterical, mascara running down her face ugly crying. The bartender offers her his filthy bar rag. She takes it and SCREAMS into it.

A customer gets up from his table, walks over - puts his arm around her.

Violet drops the bar rag and stares into the face of a masculine - Blond Ambition Era - **MADONNA DRAG QUEEN.**

MADONNA DRAG QUEEN
Oh, honey. We've all been there.
Men are just wolves in sheep's
clothing.

VIOLET
How right you are sweet lamb ... in
Madonna's face.

Violet strokes his gold, cone shaped bra.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
And Gaultier's clothes.

He gently wipes her makeup smudged face and primps her hair.

Then - fully committed -

MADONNA DRAG QUEEN
(singing)
'Look around, everywhere you turn
is heartache, it's everywhere that
you go. You try everything that you
can to escape, the pain of life
that you know. When all else fails,
you long to be something better
than you are today.'

Violet begins to sob uncontrollably again. Through tears -

VIOLET
I'd settle for being anyone else
than I am today.

BACK TO PRESENT:

INT. DR. BANERJEE'S OFFICE

VIOLET
I thought I deserved someone who
loved me as much as I loved him.

DR. BANERJEE
What makes you think Byron didn't
love you as much as you loved him?

VIOLET
He had a mistress.

Dr. Banerjee jots this down. Violet waves her hand -

VIOLET (CONT'D)
The mistress was unadulterated
greed.

DR. BANERJEE
Have you spoken with Byron about
your feelings?

Violet shakes her head.

VIOLET
I haven't seen him since the trial.

Dr. Banarjee raises an eyebrow.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
I expressed a fair amount of
vitriol through my lawyer though.
So there's that.

DR. BANERJEE
It might be time for you to
confront him face to face, as a way
to move on through your unaddressed
emotions.

OFF Violet realizing she's right and dreading the thought.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. VIOLET'S LIMOUSINE - LATER

Violet looks out the window as Louis heads down 5th Avenue - at a stop light she focuses on the **GUGGENHEIM**. She gets her cell out of her purse and calls Theo.

THEO(O.C.)

Mom?

VIOLET

Do you remember when you were small and we saw the Picasso exhibit at the Guggenheim?

THEO(O.C.)

Not really. I was ten. Any piece in particular you're referring to?

Violet pulls the phone away from her ear and looks at it.

VIOLET

No! I'm not talking about art. You were angry at Byron for not showing up to meet us. And you were so mad at me.

THEO (O.C.)

Oh, yeah - well he never showed up. I wasn't mad at you, I was mad *for* you.

VIOLET

I'm sorry I didn't provide you with a better father.

THEO(O.C.)

Are you OK?

VIOLET

Fine, I'm just starting to put some pieces of a puzzle together.

Violet puts her phone away and glances towards Louis anticipating what's coming - some spontaneous wisdom.

LOUIS

It helps if you know what the puzzle is supposed to look like when you're done.

VIOLET

Thank you Louis. I don't. Text
Bridgette, have her clear my day
tomorrow.

Louis glances at her, then texts Bridgette. (BEAT) He listens
to an incoming audio text through his Blue Tooth.

LOUIS

A Mrs. Fox is waiting for you in
the office. And the Mayor sent an
address where you can find Mariano
later this evening.

Violet takes a deep breath.

VIOLET

I do know that everyone is a piece
in someone else's puzzle though.
All obtuse, weirdly shaped and lost
in a nondescript pile just waiting
to see if we can be squeezed into
the right slot.

CUT TO:

INT. VIOLET'S OFFICE - LATER

MRS. FOX late 60's, but with a 40's face and body.

VIOLET

When I told your son he was
entitled, cheap and vulgar, he
wasn't offended. He laughed.

Violet motions to the huge bouquet of flowers.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

He sent those with an apology note.

Mrs. Fox walks over to the flowers and inhales.

MRS. FOX

Like father, like son - impervious
to insults, adept at scorn ...
always with a smile.

Violet is taken aback. She pauses before she continues.

VIOLET

You referred your son to us as a potential client to set up with a successful, attractive woman, knowing his character leaves much to be desired? I'm not a therapist.

MRS. FOX

I didn't ask you to set him up with a successful, attractive woman.

Violet is confused.

VIOLET

Well, I mean ... that's a trite, blanket description I realize.

Mrs. Fox sits down and folds her hands in her lap. She takes a deep breath. Violet sits down across from her.

MRS. FOX

There isn't a woman in the world who is going to appeal to my son.

Violet nods and shrugs.

VIOLET

So far that's apparent. But that IS my specialty - The Bridge, a path over any obstacle.

MRS. FOX

In this case, the obstacle is gender.

Violet finally gets it.

MRS. FOX (CONT'D)

I've known for ages that he's gay, hoping he would come out to me. He's a miserable jerk who sabotages every relationship because it's not what he really wants.

VIOLET

Why did you recommend he come to me without full disclosure? I have a fantastic roster of gay clients.

MRS. FOX

I want him to be happy with who he really is but that's for him to disclose in his own way. I guess I shouldn't have told you?

Shame, regret and hope show in Mrs. Fox's face. She looks to Violet for assurance. Violet goes to the bouquet Hunter sent. She lingers for a minute.

VIOLET

When you said, 'like Father like Son?'

MRS. FOX

(off-handedly)

Oh, the flowers. As apology.

Mrs. Fox looks away and gets up to leave. Violet follows her to the door.

VIOLET

Is your husband a 'miserable jerk?'

MRS. FOX

Do you always get this personal with your clients?

VIOLET

Technically, you're not my client - your son is. But to answer your question: Yes, I do. Match making is nothing but personal.

MRS. FOX

So if I'm not your client, why the question?

VIOLET

Curiosity. It hasn't killed me yet.

MRS. FOX

I've been married to my husband for a very long time with all the ups and downs. Are you married?

VIOLET

I was.

MRS. FOX

So you know sometimes you have to turn a blind eye, pretend you're deaf and feign ignorance.

Violet reacts to this -

VIOLET

I was blind, deaf and ignorant -
the extravagant ups left me ill
prepared for the cataclysmic
downfall.

MRS. FOX

Do you still love your ex-husband?

VIOLET

You need to really know someone
before you can love them and
apparently I did not.

MRS. FOX

That's not an answer.

VIOLET

I can't give you what I don't have.

Bridgette walks up to the two women -

BRIDGETTE

Sorry to interrupt, Ms. Barlow ...

Violet smiles and holds up a hand -

VIOLET

Thank you Bridgette, one moment.

Bridgette retreats. Violet walks Mrs. Fox through the office.

Standing in front of the huge glass doors of **THE BRIDGE, NYC**
VIOLET BARLOW, CEO -

VIOLET (CONT'D)

The Bridge isn't about me, it's
about my clients. And their
obstacles. Hunter's obstacles. I'll
follow his lead: when he's ready to
be honest, I'll go with that.

Mrs. Fox smiles and crosses her hands over her heart.

MRS. FOX

Thank you.

As the door sweeps closed, Violet turns and hurries back
towards Bridgette's desk

VIOLET

(to Bridgette)

Impeccable timing as usual.
(MORE)

VIOLET (CONT'D)

I was smack dab in the cross hairs
of personal introspection. Second
time today.

(uggh!)

Yes?

Bridgette hands Violet a magazine opened to -

INSERT: PHOTO OF MARTHA TOPLESS except for the heavy ropes of
PLATINUM, GOLD and EMERALD JEWELRY draping her bust.

BRIDGETTE

Martha fibbed a little.

ON VIOLET reading from the magazine.

VIOLET

'Marta Arana Leon sells luxurious
seduction, but it'll cost you.'

Violet flips through the magazine pages - reads -

VIOLET (CONT'D)

'from modest springs to lofty
ambition fulfilled.'

Violet lets the magazine pages flutter closed - looks to
Bridgette.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Martha is Marta? She fibbed a lot!

CUT TO:

EXT. LITTLE ITALY, SAN GENNARO CHAPEL - LATER

Violet enters the chapel, stepping aside for **SISTERS** carrying
covered trays of food to a **VAN** parked on the street.

INT. SAN GENNARO CHAPEL - CONTINUOUS

Walking down the vestibule, she soaks in the opulence. She
stops to read an inscription on a **PAINTING**.

MARIANO (O.C.)

Saint Veronica, known for her
kindness and charity.

Violet turns around and is awestruck by the extraordinarily
handsome man standing behind her. He reaches his hand out to
welcome her.

MARIANO (CONT'D)
 Violet? Mariano Cortazo - my father
 told me you would be visiting.

He takes her hand and leads her towards the Church Kitchen.

MARIANO (CONT'D)
 Today we prepared a sage and
 spaghetti gourde ravioli.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Nothing like the rest of the church - it's all practical
 efficiency - manned by VOLUNTEER PARISHIONERS.

Mariano takes two bowls and scoops ravioli out of a pot.

MARIANO
 I'm odd in my father's eyes ... I
 guess that's why he thinks I need
 help finding 'the one'. Hungry?

VIOLET
 I did have a pauper's lunch.
 Starving.

He hands her a bowl and a fork - grabs the same for himself.

MARIANO
 I don't prescribe to the same
 values he does so I seem unfamiliar
 to him. (BEAT) We dine al fresco
 when we can. Follow me.

As they leave the kitchen and walk out into an outdoor area -

VIOLET
 Your father didn't tell me you were
 a priest.

EXT. GARDEN AREA - CONTINUOUS

They sit at an old wooden table.

MARIANO
 (laughing)
 I'm not - I'm a layman.

Mariano takes a straw basket jug of Chianti and splashes it
 into two mismatched tumblers. He rips off a piece of bread
 and places it on top of Violet's bowl. They begin to eat.

MARIANO (CONT'D)
I'm also not celibate if you were wondering.

VIOLET
Guilty as charged.

Mariano points off to the garden as sprinklers deploy.

MARIANO
Much of the produce is grown here.

Violet inhales the warm spring air.

VIOLET
I think I can smell the sage.

MARIANO
It's important to my father for Tony and I to carry on the Cortazo legacy, I just don't want to do it the way my parents did.

VIOLET
How was that?

MARIANO
Based on status and jealousy. Beauty. Arranged. (BEAT)
When it comes to love, few people know the story of Cupid and Psyche.

VIOLET
When it comes to love most people only know the story of Mom and Dad.

MARIANO
I don't want that to be my story.

VIOLET
Your father, the MAYOR, hired me as your matchmaker. It doesn't get more status arranged than that.

MARIANO
And yet, here we are.

Mariano points to a dimly lit building beyond the garden.

MARIANO (CONT'D)
I live in the Clergy House. Not exactly screaming eligible bachelor.

VIOLET

What are you looking for?

MARIANO

I don't know if I'm even looking.

VIOLET

OK. What would you like to find? By accident let's say?

MARIANO

Honestly?

Violet nods, swipes her bread into the pasta sauce.

MARIANO (CONT'D)

Passion. For life. For me.

VIOLET

Any physical attributes in particular?

MARIANO

I don't have a 'type' if that's what you mean. But there's that sensation a person can trigger that makes you feel like your heart's just been jump-started: suddenly you can feel the blood in your veins - you feel alive - hungry for more. Like no one who came before ever existed.

Violet is silent. Mariano shakes off his reverie -

MARIANO (CONT'D)

I don't know who that looks like. Do you?

VIOLET

It's my job to help you find it. Then there's that elusive element of chemistry, it's either there or it's not.

MARIANO

Ah, yes - chemistry: responsible for both spontaneous combustion and curdling milk.

CUT TO:

INT. VIOLET'S LIMO - NEXT DAY

Violet sits in the back, dressed in a prim suit. She's reading the ***Prison Visitor's Guide*** out loud.

VIOLET

'Visitors provide a wholesome, and morally uplifting influence.'

(BEAT) So visitors are held to a higher standard than the inmates?

AERIAL VIEW Tracking rolling hills, thick forests.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

'Female visitors may not wear tube tops, off the shoulder tops or spandex. Nothing that reveals private parts or cleavage.'

(to Louis)

No dress code for the men?

AERIAL VIEW Coming in lower, a nondescript COMPLEX comes into view - an odd array of buildings that seem to have been carved incongruously out of the boonies.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

'Visitors will be subjected to random strip searches for contraband.'

Violet tucks her skirt tighter under her legs.

She rolls down her window and watches the greenery fade to gravel and a cement roadway leading to the complex.

VIOLET'S POV A sign reads - **OUT OF BOUNDS**.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Oh, my god - there are no fences.

Louis smiles into the mirror towards Violet.

LOUIS

He'd never try to escape.

VIOLET

I know, he hated getting dirty.

CUT TO:

INT. FEDERAL PENITENTIARY - BYRON'S CELL TERRACE - SAME

Two men are sitting at a concrete table and chairs set built into the foundation - they're bathed in sunlight.

CLOSE ON An older **GENTLEMAN** with a beaver tail like beard painting on a canvas. He squints his eyes towards his subject.

OLDER GENTLEMAN
Is this with hair or without?

He leans in for some detail.

BYRON (O.C.)
With! Until I can get alopecia
meds. Screw realistic.

The older gentleman rolls his eyes at -

BYRON three years post sentence. He's basically bald without his designer toupees. He's holding a swath of aluminum foil around his neck to accelerate a tan. A bottle of BABY OIL near by.

OLDER GENTLEMAN
What ever you say, but I'm a
forger, all about realistic. Those
side-burns and that hair line ...

Byron holds up a mirror.

CLOSE ON Byron's prison tatoos-created side-burns and wanna-be hair line.

He adjusts the mirror with the sunlight, preening.

BYRON
Is it too much? Too dark?

OLDER GENTLEMAN
Your head looks like an Etch-a-
Sketch drawn by a righty using his
left hand...

Byron licks his fingers and rubs at the tatoos.

OLDER GENTLEMAN (CONT'D)
... during an earthquake in a -

BYRON
(cutting him off)
OK! ok, ok. Should I put a hat on?

OLDER GENTLEMAN

She never see you without the paste-
on chinchilla?

Byron shakes his head. He uses the painter's rag to wipe sweat off his forehead, leaving damp paint streaks.

PRISON PA SYSTEM (V.O.)

Inmates with visitors please check
in with your administrator now.

Byron rips off his aluminum foil, checks himself out in the mirror again then presses creases into his prison uniform. He offers a blinding smile to his friend.

BYRON

How do I look?

The older gentleman takes a clean rag and dabs away the residual paint off Byron's face. He sits back, smiles -

OLDER GENTLEMAN

Like Goya's Saturn Eating His
Children.

CUT TO:

INT. FEDERAL PENITENTIARY - VISITORS CHECK IN - SAME

Violet weaves through the check in line with aplomb - until an over enthusiastic K-9 takes an interest in her.

The **DOG** is sniffing aggressively into her suit.

VIOLET

OH? Hello.

She pats the dog on the head - its **HANDLER** eyes her with a warning look. Violet throws her hands up in the air.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Sorry. I'm more of a cat person.
I'm allergic to cats but I like
dogs too. They're so needy.

Violet remains motionless as the K9 rotates around her.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Cats don't do this. More like the
hard to get type.

The K9 is tenacious. Violet looks for the dog's gender.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
I think *he* likes me.

GUARDS stand alert, not impressed. Violet senses this. She lets the dog sniff her and stands still.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
Animals tend to be excellent judges of character.

The K9 retreats and sits by his handler's side.

Violet wipes a bit of dog slobber off of her suit giving the handler a scolding look.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
And don't worry, I'm not going to ask to use the rest room. I know you time that shit. I read the handbook.

Proud of herself, she moves on to the METAL DETECTOR and processes through without incident.

CUT TO:

INT. FEDERAL PENITENTIARY - VISITORS LOUNGE - LATER

Violet sits at a table with other **VISITORS** waiting for their inmates to arrive. Lots of them in non-compliant outfits.

She smiles at a few women. They don't return the gesture.

Finally, the **INMATES** are ushered into the lounge. A rush of women and men rise and head to their respective humans.

Matches are made. Pairs of tarnished souls and broken bits of families find each other. They scatter and then form tiny clusters of fleeting intimacy. Routine for most of them.

Violet rises from the table - last visitor standing.

She straightens her suit, lifts her shoulders back. Squints her eyes then - slowly walks towards -

CLOSE ON Byron, a kaleidoscope of emotions shift over his face when he sees Violet. He smiles. He wants to cry.

CLOSE ON Violet, astonishment and bewildered confusion. She cries. Wants to laugh.

Violet!
BYRON

Byron?
VIOLET

An awkward tango: to hug? to shake hands? They tentatively reach out to each other, then recoil in synch.

BYRON
I missed you.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
Your head.

BYRON
I love you.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
You're bald?

BYRON
Sort of.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
Why?

BYRON
Genetics? Prison food?

Violet reaches her hand out and traces the poorly delineated lines of Byron's head tatoos.

VIOLET
No. I mean I knew about the toupees, I just didn't know it was *this* bad.

Violet looks around the empty room - takes in the gravity of this moment in her life.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
Why would you say you love me after all you did to Theo and I?

Byron, too ashamed to respond resorts to -

BYRON
You're even more exquisite than I remember.

VIOLET
You never complimented me when we were married.

BYRON
Everyone else did. I didn't?

VIOLET
(shaking her head)
It would have been a little gift.

BYRON
I gave you gifts.

VIOLET
Seized by the State of New York long ago.

Violet zeroes in on Byron sweating profusely. His armpits are four shades darker than the rest of his uniform. She holds her nose, then looks towards his feet.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
Your feet smell now too right, no
Botox in lock up for hyperhidrosis?

Byron rips a hand full of tissue from a metal box and stuffs them under his armpits.

BYRON
I am so sorry Violet. I never meant
to hurt you or Theo. I only wanted
the best for you both. All I did
was for our family.

VIOLET
All you did was for you - your
insatiable appetite for money, your
craven desire to be the consignor
of all things fraudulent and
illicit.

Byron adjusts the tissues under his armpits. Violet grabs another handful and shoves them towards him.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
A chatty bag man who used his
family as a front.

Byron slides his prison slippers off and tucks the new tissues in under his feet.

BYRON
Well, that's not entirely true.

VIOLET
You never even wrote to us.

BYRON
I did! I swear. I sent letters
every week. Almost.

VIOLET
That's weird, we never got any.

BYRON
Ask Reggie. He probably has them.

VIOLET
Was it cheaper to send letters to
your attorney instead of your
family?

Byron sheepishly indicates that it was.

BYRON

Violet, do you know how difficult it is here? I get \$290 dollars per month to buy razors, newspapers, and Sriracha? I pay half of that to the guy who does my laundry.

VIOLET

You have nothing to shave, you're not in the headlines anymore - you hate spicy food, and I paid one hundred percent for all of your dirty *MONEY* laundry.

BYRON

It's \$6.25 a month for a combo lock, .60 cents for mac & cheese and .45 cents for Diet Coke.

VIOLET

Since when did you eat macaroni and cheese or drink Diet Coke?

BYRON

Since I got here. Otherwise it's expired food from the local military bases and unfiltered water in the cafeteria.

CLOSE ON BYRON as Violet speaks, subtly reading her lips.

VIOLET

Boo Hoo! That must totally suck! Did you ever think about what it cost Theo and I? We were rendered pariahs in town. I'd have had a better chance of being invited to a luncheon if I'd had leprosy. You shallow, self-aggrandizing prick.

Violet leans in and sniffs Byron.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

You smell like baby oil. (BEAT) And you're doing it.

BYRON

What?

VIOLET

Looking at my mouth when I speak. I hated that. God, it's so annoying.

BYRON

It's just that words sort of flutter out of your mouth like a shimmering baby hummingbird. It's poetic.

Violet turns away from him, **yelling** into the empty room.

VIOLET

All Theo and I ever wanted was for you to love us and be there for us. We loved you.

She turns back around - sees a **GUARD** take notice of her outburst. She smiles and waves to the guard - all good.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

You hate birds. And poetry.

Byron pulls all the tissues from his arm pits and slippers letting them drop to the floor.

BYRON

I lied. A lot. I'm sorry.

VIOLET

Did you ever love us?

Old habits die hard: Violet picks all the tissues up off the floor, bunches them up and shoves them into her purse. Always cleaning up after him.

BYRON

I do.

FADE OUT.

